

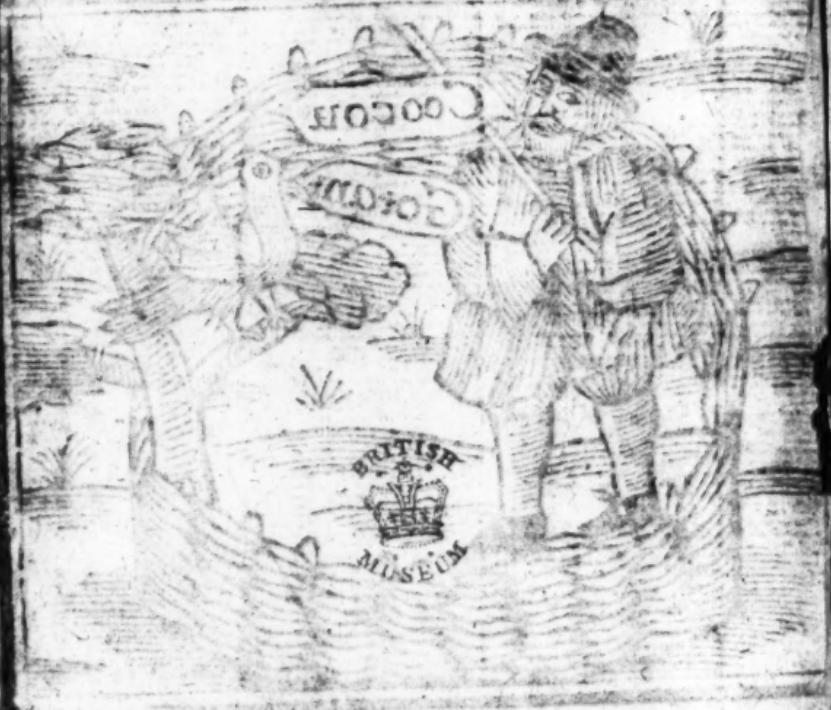
THE
MERRY TALES
O F
The Mad-Men of Gotam.

By A. B. Doctor of Physick.



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MERRY TALES



BY R. D. GOLDSMITH
ILLUSTRATED BY J. C. GREEN

Here beginneth certain Merry Tales of the
Mad-Men of *Gotam*.

The first Tale.

There was two Men of Gotam,
the one of them was going un-
to the Market to Nottingham,
to buy Sheep ; and the other came from
the Market, and both met together, up-
on Nottingham-Bridge : Well met, said
the one unto the other : whether be
you going, said he that came from Not-
tingham ? Marry, said he, that was go-
ing thither, I go to the Market to buy
Sheep ; buy Sheep, said the other, and
which way wilt thou bring them home ?
Marry (said the other) I will bring them
over this Bridge. By Robin Hood, said
he that came from Nottingham, but thou
shalt not ; by Maid Marrin, said he that
was going thitherward, but I will, thou
shalt not said one, I will said the other :
fer here, said the one ; shus there, said
the other. Then they beat their
staves against the ground, one against
other, as there had been an hundred
Sheep betwixt them. Hold in said
one. Beware the leaping over the
bridge of my Sheep, said the other. I

care not said the other. They shall not come this way, said the one ; but they shall said the other. Then said the other, and if that thou make much to do, I will put my finger into thy Mouth. A turd thou wilt, said the other. And as they were in contention, another Man of Gotam came from the Market with a sack of Meal upon his Horse, and seeing and hearing his Neighbours at strife for sheep, and none between them, said, Ah fools, will ye never learn wit : help me, said he, that had the Meal, and lay my sack upon my Shoulder : they did so, and he went to the other side of the bridge, & unloosed the Mouth of his Sack, and shook out all the Meal into the River. Now Neighbours, how much Meal is there in my Sack now ? marry there is none at all said they. Now by my faith, said he, even as much wit there is in your two heads, to strive for that thing which you have not.

Which was the wisest of all these three persons judge you ?

The second Tale.

There was a man of Gotam, did ride to the Market with two bushels of wheat, and because his Horse should not bear heavy, he carried his Corn on his neck

neck, because his horse should not carry too heavy a burden. Judge you, which was the wisest his Horse or himself.

The third Tale.

On a time the men of Gotam, would have pinned in a Cuckow, whereby she should sing all the year : so in the midst of the Town they made an hedge, round in compass, and got a Cuckow and put therein, saying to her, sing here all the year, thou shalt lack neither meat nor drink. The Cuckow, as soon as she perceived her self encompassed within the hedge, flew away. A vengeance on her said they, we made not our Hedge high enuff,

The fourth Tale.

There was a man of Gotam, the which went to the market to Nottingham to sell Cheese, and as he was going down the Hill on Nottingham-bridge, one of his Cheses did fall out of his Wallet and ran down the Hill. I whorsons, said the fellow, can you run to the Market alone ? I will send the one after the other of you. Then he laid down his Wallet and took the Cheeses and did tumble them down the Hill one after the other, and some ran into one bush, and some into another. And at the last he said, I charge you all meet me in the Market-

A place,

place, and when the fellows came into the Market-place to meet his Cheeses, he staid there till the Market was almost done. Then he went about and did enquire of his Neighbours and other Men, if they did see his Cheeses come to the Market : who should bring them said one of the Market-men ? marry themselves, said the fellow, they knew the way well enough. He said a vengeance on them all, I did fear to see my Cheeses run so fast that they would run beyond the Market : I am now fully perswaded that they be now almost at York : Whereupon he forthwith hired a Horse to ride after to York to see his Cheeses, where they were not. But unto this day no man could tell him of his Cheeses.

The fift Tale.

There was a Man of Gotam, who bought at Nottingham a Trivet, or a Bran-iron, and as he was geing home, his Shoulders grew soze with the carriage thereof, and he set it down, and seeing it had three feet, said, a whorson, hast thou three feet, and I but two : thou shalt bear me home if thou wilt ; and so set it down on the ground, and late himself down thereupon, and said to his

his Tribet, bear me as long as I have born thee, for if thou dost not, thou shalt stand still for me. The Man of Gotam did see that his Tribet would go no further ; stand still, said he, in the Mayors name, and follow me if thou wilt, I will tell thee the right way to my home. When he did come home to his House, his Wife said, where is my Tribet ? the Man said, he hath three Leggs and I but two, and I did teach him the way to my House, let him come home if he will. Where left you the Tribet. said the Wife ? at Gotam hill, said the Man. The Wife did run and fetch home the Tribet her own self, or else she had lost it through her Husbands wit.

The sixth Tale.

THERE dwelt a Smith in Gotam, who had a Wasps Nest in the Straw, in the end of his Forge : there came one of his Neighbours to have his Horse shwoed, and the Wasps were so busie, that the fellow was stung with a Wasp, he being angry, said, Art thou worthy to keep a Forge or no ? to have Men here stung with Wasps. O Neighboz, said the Smith, be content, I will put them from their Nest by and by, imme-

diateley he took a Coulder & heat it glouing hot & thrust into the straw at the end of the forge, and so set his forge on a fire, & burnit it up. Then said the Smith I told theare I would fire them out of their Pest.

The seventh Tale.

When that Good-Fryday was come, the Peple of Gotam did cast their Heads together what to do with their white herrings, their red-herrings, their sprats, and salt-fish. One consulted with the other, & agrēd that such fish should be cast into their pond or pool (the which was in the middle of the Town) that it might increase against the next year, and every man that had any fish left did cast them into the pool : one said, I have so many red Herrings, another said I have so many white-Herrings, a third said, I have so many sprats, a fourth said, I have thus many red Herrings, and the other said, I have so many salt-fishes ; let all go together into the pool or pond and we shall live like Lords the next Lent. At the beginning of the next Lent following the men did draw the pond to have their fish, and there was nothing but a great Eel, Ah said they all, a mischief on this Eel, he hath eat up all our Fish. What shall we do with him, said one to the other ?

kill

kill him said one of them, chop him all to pieces, said another, and a thir'd said, let us drown him ; be it so, said they all, So they went to another pool or pond by, and did cast the Cel into the Water, lay there, said they, and shift for thy self, for no help thou shalt have of us ; and there they left the Cel to be drowned.

The eighth Tale.

On a time the men of Gotam had forgotten to pay their Rent to their Landlord. The one said to the other, to morrow is our pay-day, & what remedy shall we find to send our mony to our Lord ? the one said, this day I have taken a quick Hare, & he shall carry it, for he is light of foot : be it so, said they all, he shall have a letter, and a purse to put in our mony, and we shall direct him the ready way ; when the Letters were written & the mony putt in a purse, they did fye them about the Hares neck, saying, thou must go first to Loughborrough, and then to Leicester, & at Newark, there is our Lord, commend us to him, & there is his due. The Hare as soon as he was out of their Hands, he did run a clean contrary way : some cried to him, saying, thou must go to Longborough first ; some

some said, let the Hare alone, he can tell a nearer way than the best of us all can do, let her go.

The ninth Tale.

On a time there was one of Gotam, mowing in the Meads, and found a great Grashopper ; he cast his Sith, and ran home to his Neighbors, and said, that there was a Devil in the Field that hopped in the Grass : then there was every man ready with Clubs and Staves, with Halberds and other weapons to kill the Grashopper : when they did come unto the place where the Grashopper should be, said the one to the other let every man cross himself from the Devil, for we will not meddle with him, and so they returned again and said, we were blest this day that we went no further. Ah Cowards, said he that had the Sith in the Head, help me to fetch my Sith, no said they, it is good to sleep in a whole skin : better to lose thy Sith, then to mar us all.

The tenth Tale.

On a certain time there were twelve men of Gotam that did go a fishing, and some did wade in the Water : and some stood upon dry land, and when they went home ward, one said to the other we

we have ventured wonderful hard this day in wading, I pray God that none of us that did come from home be drowned : Marry, said the one to the other, let us see that, for there did twelve of us come out ; and they told themselves, and every man did tell eleven, and the twelfth man did never tell himself. Alas, said one to the other, there is one of us drowned. They went back to the brook, where they had been fishing, and sought up and down for him that was drowned, and did make great lamentation. A Courtier did come riding by, and he did ask what it was they did seek, and why they were so sorry ? Oh said they, this day we went to fish in the brook, and there did come out twelve of us and one is drowned. Why, said the Courtier, tell how many be of you, and the one said eleven, and he did not tell himself : Well, said the Courtier, what will you give me, and I will find out twelve men ? Sir, said they all the money we have, Give me, the money, said the Courtier, and he began with the first and gave him a recumbendibus over the shoulders, that he groaned, and there is one ; so he served all, that they groaned on the matter : when he did come to the last,

he paid him a good, saying, here is the twelfth man. Gods blessing on your heart, said all the Company, that you have found out our Neighbour.

The Eleventh Tale.

There was a man of Gotam, that did ride upon the high way, and there he found a Chæse, & he pulled out his sword and bozed and pricked with the point of his sword to take up the Chæse, There did come another man by, & did alight & took up the Chæse, and did ride his way with it ; the man of Gotam did ride back to Nottingham, to buy a longer sword to take up the Chæse, & when he had bought his sword retuned back, & when he did come to the place where the Chæse did lay, he pulled out his sword, & pricked the ground, saying. A murrain take it, if I had had this sword, I had had the Chæse my self, and now another hath got it.

The twelfth Tale.

There was a man of Gotam, & he did not love his wife, and having fair hair, her Husband said divers times that he would cut it off, and he durst not do it, when she was waking, but when she was asleep : so on a night he took a pair of Shærs and laid them under his beds-head, which his wife perceived,

& then she did call to one of her maids, &
 said, go to bed to my husband, for he is
 minded to cut off my hair to night : let
 him cut off thy hair, & I'le give thee as
 good a Kertle, as ever thou didst wear ?
 the maid did so, & fained her self asleep,
 which the man perceiving, cut off her
 hair, and wrapt it about his Sheers, and
 laid it under his beds head, & fell asleep.
 The Wifre made her maid to arise, and
 took the hair and the Sheers & went in-
 to the Hall, and there burnt the Hair :
 The man had a Horse, which he did love
 above all things (as she well did know)
 the good wife went into the husbands
 Stable and cut off the Horses tayl, & did
 wrap the Sheers in the horse-tayl, & laid
 them under her husbands head. In the
 morning she did rise betimes, and did
 sit by the fire kembing of her Head, at
 last the Man did come to the fire, and
 seeing his Wifre kembing of her Head,
 marvelled much thereat. The Maid
 seeing her Master stand in a brown
 study, said, what a Devil ails the Horse
 in the Stable for he bleedeth sore ? the
 good man ran into the Stable, and found
 that his Horse-tayl was cut off, he
 went to his beds head and did find his
 Sheers wrapt up in his Horse-tayl, and
 did,

did come to his Wife, saying I cry thee mercy, soz, I had thought that I had cut off thy hair to night, and I have cut off my horse Tayl : yea said she, self do, self have ; many a man thinketh to do another man a shrewd turn, and it turneth oft tynes to his own self.

The thirteenth Tale,

There was a man of Gotam that laid a wager with his Wife that she should not make him a Cuckold : no said she, but I can : spare me not (quoth he) do what thou canst. On a time she hid all the spiggots and fausets in the house, and she went into her Buttrey, and set a Barrel a broach, and cryed out to her Husband, and said, I pray you bring me hither a spiggot and a fauset, or else all the Ale will run out : the good man sought up and down and could find none, Come hither then said she and hold your finger, in the Tap-hole, she pulled out her finger, and the good man put in his. She then called unto her Taylor, which did dwell at the next door, with whom she made a blind bargain : and within a while after she came to her Husband, and did bring a spiggot and fauset with her saying, pull out thy finger out of the Tap-hole gentle Cuckold, soz you have lost

lost your bargain. I beshrew your heart for your labour, said the good man; make no such bargains then, said she, with me.

The fourteenth Tale.

THERE was a man of Gotam had taken a young Buzzard, and to the eating of it did bid four or five Gentlemens Servants; the Wife had killed an old blood Goose, and she and two of her Gossips had eaten up the Buzzard, and the old Goose was laid to the fire for the Gentlemens Servants; and when they were come and the old Goose was set before them; what is this then said one of the men; the good man said, a good fat Buzzard. A Buzzard said they, it is an old Goose, and thou art a Knave to mock us, and in great anger they departed out of his House and went home; the fellow was very sorry that the Gentlemens Servants were angry and did take a bag and did put in the Buzzards Feathers, and thought to go to them, and shew them the Feathers of the Buzzard, and so to please them. The Wife prayed her Husband ere he went, to fetch in a block for the Fire, and in the mean space she pulled out the Buzzards Feathers, and did put in the Goose feathers; the Man taking his Wallet or Bag,

bag, went to the Gentlemans servants and said, pray you be not angry with me, for you shall see here that I had a Buzzard, for here be the feathers : and he opened his bag and shook out all the goose feathers ; the Gentlemans servants seeing the goose feathers, said why thou knave couldest thou not be contented to mock us at thine own house, but art come to mock us here ? the one took a waster in his hand, and did give him a dozen stripes, saying, take this for a Reward, and hereafter mock us not any more.

The fifteenth Tale.

THERE was a young man of Gotam, the which went a wooing to a fair Maid, his Mother warned him before-hand, saying, when thou dost look upon her, cast a Sheeps eye, and say, how do you sweet Pigs me ? the fellow went to the Butchers and bought seven or eight Sheeps Eyes, and when this lusty wooper did sit at dinner, he would look upon this fair Wench, and would cast in her face, a Sheeps eye. saying how do you sweet pigs me : how do I ? said the Wench, Swines face why dost thou cast the Sheeps eye at me : O sweet pigg

pigs-ni, have at thee another: I desir
thee swines face, said the Wench. The
fellow being abosh ed, said, What. Sweet
pigs-ni be content! for if you live until
the next year, thou wilt be a foul sow:
Clark knave, walk, said she, for if thou
do live until the next year, thou wilt be
a Clark knave, a lubber, and a fool. Here
a man may see, that for a mans good
will he shall have evil will and displea-
sure.

The sixteenth Tale.

A Mans wife of Gotam was brought
to bed of a man Chil d; the father did
bid the Gossips, which were Children of
eight or nine years of age. The eldests
name that shoulde be Godfather, was na-
med Gilbert, the second child was named
Humphry, and the God-mothers name
was Christabel. The sciends of them did
admonish them saying, that divers
times they must say after the Priest:
when all were come to the Church doo?
the Priest said, he ye all agreed of the
name? be you, said Gilbert, agreed of
the name? be you, said Humphry, agreed
of the name? be you said Christabel, a-
greed of the name? The Priest said,
wherefore be ye come hither? Gilbert
said, wherefore be you come hither?

Humphry said, wherefore be you come hither? Christabel said, wherefore be you come hither? The Priest being much amazed, could not tell what to say, but whistled and said, whew: Gilbert whistled and said whew, Humphry whistled and so did Christabel. The Priest being angry, said, go home fools, go home fools, go home: go home, fools go home, said Humphry: go home fools, go home, said Christabel. The Priest then provided for Godfathers and God-mothers. Here a man may see that Children can do nothing without good instructions, and they be not wise that will regard Childrens words.

The seventeenth Tale.

There was a man of Gotam the which should be married: and when the day of marriage was appointed, and the time come that they should be married together, the Priest said, say after me: the man said, say after me: the Priest said, say not after me such words, but say after me as I will tell thee: the fellow said, say not after me such words, but say after me as I will tell thee. The Priest said, thou dost play the fool and the knave to mock with the holy Sacrament of Matrimony. The fel-

low

low said, thou dost play the fool and the knave to mock with the holy Sacrament of Matrimony. The priest could not tell what to say, but said, what shall I do with this fool? the fellow said, what shall I do with this fool? Fare well, said the Priest. I will not marry thee. Howbeit the fellow by other men was instructed how to do, after that he was married. And I heard such a foolish prank played at Kingstone of late days.

The eighteenth Tale.

There was a Scotchman the which did dwell at Gotam, and he had taken a House a little from London, and of it he would make an Inn, and to his sign he would have the Bores-head, and went to London to have a Bores-head made. He did come to a Carver or Joyner, saying in his mother tongue, I say speak, canst thou make me a bare head? yea, said the Carver. Then said the scottishman, make me a bare head an oul peul, and thouse have twenty pence for thy hite. I will do it, said the Carver, on S. Andrews day before Christmas, which is named Youl in Scotland, and in England in the North: the Scotch-man did come to London for his Bores-head, to set it at the door for a Sign. I say,

Speak, said the Scotchman, hast thou made me a bare head? yes, said the carver: and fetching him a mans head that was bare, & said, Sir, here is your bare head. I, said the Scotchman, the middle Devil is this a bare head? yea, said the Carver. I say, said the Scottish man, I will have a Bare head, Iske an head as doth follow a Sew that hath Gryces. O r. said the Carver, I cannot tell what is a Sew, and what is a gryce. What ho son, knowest thou not a Sew that wil greet and groan, and her gryces will run after her and cry a week a week. O said the Carver, it is a Pig, yea, said the Scottishman, let me have her Fathers head made in timber, and make me a bird, and set on her scalps, and cause her to sing whip whir: the Carver said, I cannot cause her to sing whip whir. Who horson, said the scotchman, gat her as she shoud sing whip whir. Here you may see that every man doth delight in his own sence, or doth rejoice in his fantasie.

The niteteenth Tale.

I N old time when these aforesaid Testis was (as Men of the Country reported) that such fantastical matters were done at Gorapi, In which I cannot tell half, the

the wives were gathered together in an ale-house, and the one said to the other, that they were all profitable to their husbands: which way good Gossip, said the ale-wife? The first said, I shal tell you good Gossips; I can neither bake, brew, nor I can do no work: wherefore I do make every day holiday, and I go to the Ale-house, because at all times I cannot go to the Church; and in the Ale-house I pray God to spre well my husband, and I do think my prayer should do him much more good then my labour if I should work. Then said the second, I am profitable to my husband in saving of Candies in Winter, for I do cause my husband and all my household-folks to go to bed by day-light, and to rise by day-light. The third wife said, and I am profitable to my husband in sparing of bread, for I will eat but little, for the drinking a gallon or two of good ale I care for no meat. The fourth wife said, I am loath to spend meat & drink at home in mine own house, wherefore I do go unto the Wine-Tavern at Nottingham, and so take wine & such things as God shall send me there. The fifth wife said, a man shall have ever more company in another mans house

house then his own, and most commonly in an ale-house is the best chear in the Town: and for sparing of meat and drink, and other necessities, I go to the Ale-house. The sixth wife said, my husband hath wool, and flax, and tow, and to spare it, I go to other mens houses to do other mens work. The seventh wife said, I do spare my husbands wood and coals, and do sit talking all the day by other mens fires. The eighth said, Beef, and Mutton, and Pork is dear, wherefore I do spare it, and do take Pig, Goose, Hen, Chicken, Coney and Capon, the which be of lower price. The ninth said, and I do spare my husbands Soap and lye, for whereas I should, Wash once a Week, I do Wash but once in a quarter of a year. Then said the Alewife, and I do keep my husbands ale that I do brew from sowing, for whereas I was wout to drinke up all, now I leave never a drop.

The Twentieth Tale.

ON Ash-Wednesday the Priest of Gotam would have a Collation to his Parishioners, and said, Friends, the time is come that you must use prayer and fasting, and alms-deeds, and this week come you to Christ, and I will tell

tell you more of my mind, but as for Prayers, I think there be not two persons in the parish can say their Pater-noster. As for fasting, you fast still, for you have not a good meals meat in the whole year: as for alms-deeds, what should you do to give any thing, that have nothing to take to? But when that you come to the shifft, I will tell you more of my mind after Mass. The good man that did keep the Ale-house did come to shifft, and above all things he confessed himself to be drunk divers times in the year, especially in Lent. The Priest said, in Lent thou shouldest most refrain from drunkenness, and abstain from drinck, Not so, said the fellow, for it is an old proverb, that fish must swim; yea, said the Priest, it must swim in water. I cry you mercy, quoth the fellow, I thought it shold a swam in good ale.

So one after an other the Men of Gotam did come to shifft, and when they were shiven, the Priest said, I cannot tell what Penance to give you: if I should enjoyn you to Prayer, there is none of you can say your pater-noster, and you be now too old to learn. And to enjoyn you to Fast, it were

were but foolishness; for you have not
to eat a good meals meat in a year;
Wherefore I do enjoin thee to labour
well all the week that thou madest fare
well to dinner on the Sundays, and
I will come to dinner and see if it be so,
and take part: another man he did en-
join to fare well on Monday, and who-
ther on Tuesday, and one after another,
that one or other should fare well once a
week, that he might have a part of the
meat: and as for alms-deeds, the Pre-
sato, you be but beggars all, except it be
one or two, therefore bestow your Alms
on your selves.

F I N I S.

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